

Farmers and ranchers, able to eke out a living from the land in past years, now find it almost impossible to break even. Most are losing money and fighting to stay in the farming business. And, the crisis line is busy.

We are all aware of the problems tobacco is having.

But, in North Carolina, according to a recent news report, the state's top farm commodity, hogs, have experienced a fifty percent drop in prices since 1996. Wheat is down forty-two percent. Soybeans are down thirty-six percent. Corn—thirty-one percent; peanuts—twenty-eight percent.

Turkey and cotton prices are down twenty-three percent, since 1996.

In fact, my friends, at the time I made my remarks, there was no commodity in North Carolina that makes money for farmers. And, the crisis line is busy. In 1862, the year the Department of Agriculture was created, ninety percent of the population farmed for a living.

Today, American producers represent less than 3 percent of the population.

By 1992, there were only 1.1 million small farms left in the United States, a 45 percent decline from 1959! North Carolina had only a little over 39,000 farms left in 1992, a 23 percent decline. In 1920, there were over 6 million farms in the United States and close to a sixth—926,000 were operated by African-Americans. In 1992, the landscape was very, very different.

Only 1 percent of the farms in the United States are operated by African-Americans.

One percent—18,816, is a paltry sum when African-Americans comprise 13 percent of the total American population.

In my home state of North Carolina, there has been a 64 percent decline in minority farmers, just over the last 15 years, from 6,996 farms in 1978 to 2,498 farms in 1992.

All farmers are suffering under this severe economic downturn.

Just before I made my remarks on the Floor, I spoke with a farmer who was working off the farm—not to earn extra money—but, to earn enough money to save his small farm.

He made no money from the farm, in fact he lost money.

Taking a job off the farm was the only thing he could do to save his farm and pass it on to his children.

The man is seventy years old.

And, the crisis line is busy.

Mr. Speaker, when next you drive through a state where the food and fiber for America is produced—the least expensive and best quality food and fiber in the world—take note of the farm, and the people who are trying to make their living from the land.

It will take us, Congress, to relieve the pressure on the national crisis lines.

Farmers and farm families deserve a chance—a chance for the dwindling number of farmers and ranchers who feed and help clothe us at prices that are unmatched around the world.

I am reminded of the story that the former Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Kika De LeGarza, would tell.

While touring a nuclear submarine, he asked the Commander how long could it stay submerged.

After some reluctance in responding to what the Commander considered top secret information, he finally told the Chairman, "As long as the food lasts."

Food, my friends, is vital to America's defense and national security.

And, the crisis line is busy.

Before the "Freedom to Farm" Bill of 1996, the farm price safety net was shield against uncertain and fluctuating commodity prices.

When that Bill was being considered, we referred to it as "Freedom to Fail." I am sad to report that our admonitions have been far too accurate. We must now correct that error.

If we do nothing about the real problems facing these hard-working citizens, they may not be there at a later time.

And, that will hurt all of us, because we too, as human beings, can stay only as long as the food lasts.

That is why we need a Rural Caucus, and that is why we are here today.

A TRIBUTE—LOUIS BRACH WAS TRULY A HERO

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask that we all pause for a moment to remember a man who we have lost, Louis Brach. Though he is gone, he will live on in the hearts of all who knew him and be remembered for long years by many who didn't.

Mr. Brach was a former mayor, city councilman, as well as, an entrepreneur in Grand Junction. He was known as a wonderful businessman and had the gift of recognizing opportunity well ahead of others. As the owner of Brach's Market, he would go out of his way to tend to all of his customers. When he moved to Grand Junction at the age of 5, he knew that he was destined to make a difference.

Louis Brach is someone who will be missed by many. His friends and family will miss the man that they all enjoyed spending time with. The rest of us will miss the man who exemplified the selflessness that so few truly possess. But, when we lose a man such as Mr. Brach, being missed is certainly no precursor to being forgotten. And, everyone who ever knew him, will walk through life differently for it.

RECOGNITION OF JO-ANNE F. WILKIE

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jo-Anne Wilkie of St. Clair, Michigan for her inexhaustible efforts to further her community's appreciation of the arts.

For the past fifteen years, Jo-Anne has served as the Executive Director of The Art Center in Mount Clemens, Michigan. She has worked relentlessly to expose our community to the fine arts, as well as to preserve the historic center for generations to come. Under Jo-Anne's direction the center has truly prospered, and her work on the "Art in Public Places" program has made a tangible contribution to the lives of thousands by bringing fine art out of the confines of museums and into the streets and parks of our community.

Jo-Anne's work in Mount Clemens is only one chapter in a life that has been devoted to serving her community. Before coming to Mount Clemens, Jo-Anne was an elementary school vocal music teacher, the Founding Executive Director of the Downriver Council for the Arts, and the General Supervisor of Arts and Special Programs for the City of Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation. For her extraordinary commitment and hard work, Jo-Anne was awarded the key to the City of Indianapolis.

Jo-Anne is now being honored by the Daughters of Isabella Queen of the Skies Circle No. 683, and I ask that you join with me in commending Jo-Anne Wilkie for her inspiring devotion to the improvement of our community through the arts.

HONORING THE LATE WALTER HALL

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness to honor Walter Hall, who passed away on Sunday afternoon at age 92. Walter Hall, known by many as "Mr. Democrat" was a man who not only talked the talk, but walked the walk. He was a true visionary with a vision of a better life for all Americans.

He spent his life fighting for equality, justice, and opportunity. Walter was at the forefront of the civil rights movement, he spoke out eloquently about his belief that all men were created equal. He led the charge to abolish the poll tax, supported equal rights for women, and worked for the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

He was a community activist who believed in opportunity for all, and was always looking to the future of the Southeast Texas-Gulf Coast area. He negotiated with the city of Houston to supply clean drinking water to Galveston County cities, and helped build the first water and sewer facilities in League City, Hitchcock, La Marque, Dickinson, Alta Loma, Kemah and Friendswood. He is credited with bringing NASA to the Clear Lake area, for the location of the Mainland Medical Center, and for the expansion of the seawalls of Texas City and Galveston. Throughout his long and successful career as a banker he provided opportunity to many through small business loans.

He was a man of humble beginnings who became a man of great fortune and power. He served as a mentor for many young people interested in politics, and was a close friend of President Lyndon B. Johnson and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. "Mr. Democrat" was a liberal Democrat and proud of it. Walter was a tremendous influence on the political community in Texas, and those in the political arena often sought his advice. He was actively involved with Lyndon Johnson, Ralph Yarborough, Jack Brooks, myself, and numerous other national, state, and local public officials.

Walter was a family man. He married his high school sweetheart Helen, had three sons, 8 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. In 1999 he donated Helen's Garden to the City of League City, a park in the Historical section

of town featuring 100 year old Butler Oaks, to honor his late wife and to protect the oak trees. His hobbies included hunting and fishing, activities he could pursue with his family in tow.

Mr. Speaker, despite all his clout, Walter Hall remained a man of the people, honest and forthright. His was of the utmost character, and his attributes of selflessness and commitment to others are rare gifts that the Southeast Texas-Gulf Coast area was lucky to have. His work and his dedication to the people of this great country is unparalleled. Walter will be sorely missed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HENRY W. MCGEE POST OFFICE BUILDING BILL

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 3909, designating a United States Postal Service facility in the First Congressional District of Illinois as the "Henry W. McGee Post Office Building."

Henry McGee, the first black Postmaster of Chicago, gave 44 years of outstanding and exemplary service to the Post Office Department, now known as the U.S. Postal Service. He began his career in 1929 as a temporary substitute letter carrier and ended it in 1973 as General Manager of the eight metropolitan districts of Chicago.

For this reason alone, I think it is more than fitting to honor his service and commitment to excellence, by naming the post office facility at 4601 South Cottage Grove Avenue as the "Henry W. McGee Post Office Building." But Mr. McGee's accomplishments do not end here and neither should the praise.

Mr. McGee coordinated the arrangements for the 1939 convention of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees and in 1945 he served as president of the Chicago branch of the National Alliance. In 1948, Mr. McGee was appointed by the postmaster to manage the employment office, later becoming the manager and overseeing the conversion to career employment for a large number of female employees.

Continuing to strive for excellence, Mr. McGee acquired his bachelor of science degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and earned a promotion making him General Foreman. Later, he became Superintendent of the largest finance station of the Post Office Department. In 1961, Mr. McGee received a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Chicago, while concurrently being promoted to Personnel Manager for the Chicago region of the Post Office Department, which encompassed Illinois and Michigan. Five years later, Mr. McGee became the first black Postmaster of Chicago.

Abraham Lincoln said: "... in the end it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

I am honored to submit this legislation saluting 90-year-old Henry McGee, a praiseworthy and admirable man. I urge my colleagues to support this worthwhile measure.

A TRIBUTE TO FRUITA MONUMENT HIGH SCHOOL'S WILD CAT DEBATE TEAM

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments of an outstanding student organization, the Fruita Monument High School Speech and Debate Team. In doing so I would like to honor the following individuals on the team for their superb contributions to the speech and debate team: Juli Carrillo, Ginger Jacobson, Jenna Birkhold, and Eric Slater.

The stellar performance by the team is a direct indication to why they qualified for the national competition, to be held in Portland, OR. Their love of argumentation and debating issues helped them become victorious. They have proven to be an asset to their school and community.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I say congratulations to the Fruita Monument's Speech and Debate team on a truly exceptional accomplishment.

HONORING ANTHONY GENTILE

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend and submit the following article to my colleagues:

Anthony Gentile has spent his life serving people. In 1965 he traveled to nine countries in Europe with Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes on a trade mission and was honored with an Executive Order of Ohio Commodore. In 1967, he was named "Citizen of the Year" by the Wintersville, Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Also that year, he was one of forty-two American Delegates to the Fifth International Mining Congress held in the Soviet Union. In 1977, he was the recipient of an honorary degree "Doctor of Humane Letters" by the Franciscan University of Steubenville as well as the Conservation and Reclamation Award for the State of Ohio, the only award given by the Governor.

Additionally, Mr. Gentile is a past member of the Board of Franciscan University of Steubenville and has served on the Board of the Union Bank in Steubenville, Ohio. He is currently listed in the World Who's Who in Commerce and Industry and Who's Who in Finance and Industry. Despite all of these efforts, he also finds time to devote to the cause of cancer research.

Mr. Gentile is married to the former Nina A. DiScipio. The couple have been married for fifty-six years and have four children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Anthony Gentile. His lifelong service and commitment are to be commended. I am proud to call him a constituent and a friend.

CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 14, 2000

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak out for our rural American communities and to join my colleagues, Mrs. CLAYTON from North Carolina, Mr. MORAN from Kansas, Mr. POMEROY from North Dakota to celebrate the formation of the new Congressional Rural Caucus.

This morning we held a press conference to formally announce the formation of our new Congressional Rural Caucus. We were joined by several Members of the Rural Caucus, the Speaker of the House DENNIS HASTERT, former Representative Glenn English from Oklahoma who was representing the National Rural Network, and many Americans who live and work in our rural communities across our great nation.

Those attending the press conference expressed such strong support for our initiative to review the Congressional Rural Caucus. It really says to me that there is a great deal of support for our rural American communities. That there's a real recognition of just how important rural America is to our nation. It tells me that we're on the right track here with our Rural Caucus. And there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that our Rural Caucus can and will help communities achieve real results.

Since last August my colleagues, Mrs. CLAYTON from North Carolina, and Misters MORAN from Kansas, and POMEROY from North Dakota, have been hard at work laying the ground work for the Rural Caucus. And we've been hard at work recruiting Members to join and take an active part in the Rural Caucus. We set a goal of 100 Members by our kick-off date. We not only met our goal, we surpassed it. To date, there are well over 110 bipartisan Members of the Rural Caucus. And more Members are joining every day. We've all joined together to raise a loud voice for rural America on Capitol Hill. Think about it. With nearly a fourth of the House on board, that's one heck of a loud voice. And the list just keeps growing.

To my Rural Caucus colleagues I want to say "thank you." Thank you for standing up and speaking out for your rural communities. Together we can make a real difference for all of rural America, and I look forward to the work that lies ahead of us.

Now to be honest, we couldn't have done this alone. It took a lot of work and assistance and support from the many, many organizations of the National Rural Network. To all of the groups who have supported our efforts for the Rural Caucus, thank you. Because of your experience, your knowledge, and your living connections with rural America, you all are an integral part of the success of the Rural Caucus. And I look forward to working with you on all that lies ahead.

Now I want to briefly talk about why I think the Rural Caucus is so important and why I think it's needed here on Capitol Hill. You may know that about one in every four Americans—that's 62 million people—live in rural America. That's also about the same number of people who live in inner cities. And an additional 15 million people live in small cities and towns.